

Dr. Irvin Abell, president of the American Medical Association, at once called attention to the dangers of such a program, and the difficulties that must be encountered in devising a governmental plan adapted to widely different sections of the country. Dr. Hugh Cabot of the Mayo Clinic, on the other hand, in his espoused report, criticized the American Medical Association for not meeting its responsibilities. Similar statements were given by Mr. Lee Pressman, legal counsel for the CIO, who felt that the plan proposed should be kept "free of control by the hierarchy of medicine." Dr. Olin West, secretary of the American Medical Association, on the contrary, again emphasized the risks inherent in medical practice if that were to be under the domination of political forces such as exist in the United States, and Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, suggested that first efforts to alleviate human morbidity might better be directed in support of work that would do away with underlying poverty and deplorable social welfare conditions clearly causative factors in creating illnesses that might otherwise have been prevented.

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California's Experience.—California is fortunate in that methods to overcome whatever deficiencies may exist are being tried out along constructive lines in Alameda and other counties. It will be of interest, therefore, to note what new federal and state legislation, if any, this recent "National Health Conference" will, after its labors, induce.

PASSING OF JOSEPH P. WIDNEY, FOUNDER OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

To have lived to the ripe old age of 97, with a mind keen and alert up to its last hours, despite such physical handicaps as a frail body and practical blindness, is an experience that has not often come to human beings. Yet such was the life* of Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney, whose death took place at Los Angeles on July 4, 1938.

Doctor Widney, it will be recalled, was the motivating spirit in the founders group which organized the Los Angeles County Medical Association on January 31, 1871, some sixty-seven years ago, and he—who in recent years was the oldest living graduate of the University of California (having received his M. D. degree from Toland Medical College in 1866)—also founded the College of Medicine of the University of Southern California in the year 1885. Later, in the financial panic of the nineties, he resigned as dean of the University of Southern California Medical Department in order to take over the responsibility of saving the University of Southern California at a time when its properties were about to be levied on by the courts; guaranteeing with his personal resources

as he assumed the presidency the payment of the claims pending against the institution.

Born in Ohio in 1841, so far back that he recalled a childhood amid the wigwams of Indians, a soldier in the War Between the States and an assistant surgeon in Indian campaigns in Arizona, while successful as a physician in private practice in Los Angeles, he became the founder of a county medical society that is today one of the largest in the United States. He was also founder and dean of a medical school, and president and protector and saviour of the University of Southern California in its early days of life and death struggle. As a civic worker he had a broad and far-seeing vision of railroad, harbor and other developments, on a massive scale, for the southern section of California. Also minister of the gospel, and founder of a settlement house, and devotee of the gospel work, author of volumes of historical and other essays,† including a large two-volume "Race Life of the Aryan Peoples," he proved himself a kindly philosopher, with a mind richly stored with knowledge of the past, and ever alert and inquiring as to the significance of current changes and events. Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney's life was indeed such as is granted to but few men to enjoy.

And so, once more, a great man has been gathered to his fathers.

The following two essays, "Why Is Death?" and "Heaven," both written by Doctor Widney a few days before his death, are here printed as an *In Memoriam* to a beloved physician, whose name the California Medical Association may well place on its honor roll, and for all time to come:

WHY IS DEATH?*

Across the pathway of life, and apparently bringing it to an end, is Death, and from the earliest antiquity men have been asking the question, "Why death at all?" "Does it serve any useful purpose in the Drama of Life?" The answer is Yes, without death the drama of life would be a failure. The purpose of that drama is—The Making of a Man: not simply for time, but for eternity. That making is what has been called Evolution. Through all the years of his life man has been growing. It is the law of evolution, that is, of growth. The planet grows. It is first a gaseous nebula. It then becomes a habitable world. The man's body through which he works is a necessary attendant upon that life. A man may will that a brick shall place itself at a certain point in a wall which he is building—it does not obey. But he may will that hand to take that brick and put it into its proper place. It is matter acting upon matter through the use of matter. It is so in all phenomena of life. The subtle and intangible will of the spirit has acted upon matter. But, in this circuitous way, man realizes that he is hampered and restricted in his work.

Man is restricted in his knowledge of the world about him. He had thought that the seven prismatic colors were all. By using the chemical paper, he now knows there is an infra-red and an ultra-violet which he does not see. It is so in every department of human inquiry. It is so in the pitch, in the low and the high notes in music, and it is so in all the broad field of strange, intangible rays of power and light that come to us from the universe about us.

Shall man be stopped in his intellectual evolution by the limited range of the possibilities of further investigations in

* Biographical sketches of the late Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney appeared in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE in the following issues: Vol. 44, No. 4, April, 1936, page 292; Vol. 44, No. 5, May, 1936, page 396; Vol. 46, No. 6, June, 1937, page 398.

† Doctor Widney was the author of the following volumes: "Race Life of the Aryan Peoples," "The Lure of the Land," "Three Americas," "A Greater Los Angeles," "A New Europe," "A New Orient," "Studies of Other Worlds."

* This essay was dictated by Dr. Joseph P. Widney on June 29, 1938, his death occurring five days later, on July 4, 1938.

the universe about him, because of the material limitations of the body through which, in this life, he must work? There is no escape from these limitations unless he is released from the body which defines them. This is why Death! Death is simply release that men may go on.

This is what every religion tries to explain. Man set free from the shackles that impede his progress that he may go on. It is not a calamity. It is a blessing in disguise. It is like the blessing of toil placed upon primitive man that he might work and progress.

The idle man in Paradise had failed. The man who went out from Eden to toil with the briars and brambles of a fertile earth that he might have food succeeded.

But the time comes when a man, even with all his achievements, reaches the limit. He can go no farther in a lifetime. Is his progress to cease? Death in this life has answered the question. Death is not a calamity! Man may still go on; Death may be the sum total of his experiences. It is the greatest blessing to man that God has made. Die—and go on!

Is this death to be all or does Eternity hold other deaths yet to come?

We deem that this life is not all, but is only one stage in the evolution of man upon earth. Eternal life upon this planet is withheld from man. The story is thus told in Genesis III, Verses 22, 23, 24.

(22) "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

(23) "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

(24) "So he drove out the man: and he placed at the East of the Garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way of the tree of life."

Eternal life upon earth—do we realize what it would mean? The body grows old—it has worn out its material envelope. Age, and a life properly lived, brings with it maturity. After maturity there follows decay.

HEAVEN†

Heaven—What is it?—When?—Where?

What conclusion must we draw from the many beliefs of the ancient and modern writers? Only one conclusion will be possible, that we are mistaken utterly in the meaning of the word Heaven. Everywhere in the Universe we find the law of eternal growth and eternal deterioration. It seems to be the same in every department of the Universe—material, intellectual, and spiritual. The pleasures of heaven lie in the thought:

I, too, am a sharer in the development of the worlds about me, a sharer with God, therefore forever sharing in the mind of the Supreme Maker of the Law. Was this not the deeper meaning of the word spoken by the Supreme Ruler—when discussing the future of man upon earth, "He will become as one of us—knowing good and evil"? The thought is, if in this lower sphere man should eat of the tree of life and live and gain eternal life, would it be death to his soul?

Life as we know it upon this plane is to be lived by successive births and consequent deaths; the soul progressing and developing in accordance with the fixed and unchanging law spoken in the beginning.

ROENTGENOLOGY, PATHOLOGY AND ANESTHESIOLOGY IN HOSPITALS

Growth of the Hospital System in the United States.—Problems in policy that are not vexatious are usually easily solved. By contrast, an example of a vexatious proposition, presented during the last few years at each annual session of the American Medical Association, is that dealing with the status of physicians specializing in

pathology, roentgenology and anesthesia, and relating to their work in hospitals. The confusion has arisen because, in part, the standardization rules for hospitals, as laid down within the last decade or so by both the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons, have not only stressed the importance of hospitals maintaining high standards in these three specialties, but have practically denied to institutions not properly staffed therein places on the lists of Accredited and Approved Hospitals. That fact, with the trend within the medical profession itself not only to utilize hospital facilities for patients for a larger number of diseases and surgical conditions than in prior periods, but to send patients to the institutions almost at the onset of certain medical or surgical conditions, has resulted in the education of the public and their understanding that patients undergoing hospitalization should have the right to expect a high type of roentgenologic, pathologic and anesthesia service as part of routine hospital régime. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that surface differences of opinion between some hospital administrators and physicians devoting themselves to the above specialties should have arisen.

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The Ten Principles Enunciated by the American Medical Association.—At the 1934 American Medical Association annual session, its House of Delegates enunciated ten principles that have been generally accepted by the constituent state medical associations. This year, at San Francisco, additional representations on the subject were made by delegates from California, Massachusetts and other states, and by action duly taken. Paragraph 4 of these ten pronouncements was amplified by the addition of the following clarifying statement:

"If for any reason it is found desirable or necessary to include special medical services such as anesthesia, radiology, pathology or medical services provided by out-patient departments, these services may be included only on the condition that specified cash payments be made by the hospitalization organization directly to the subscribers for the cost of the services."

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California Medical Association Is in Accord.

The action so taken at the recent June session of the American Medical Association is in line with similar motions previously adopted by the constituted authorities of the California Medical Association. The attention of hospitals, and of hospitalization groups, and of physicians generally is directed to this amplification of the ten American Medical Association principles as a rule for their guidance. Back of all the discussion are two important facts: first, that roentgenologists, pathologists and anesthetists are members of the medical profession, with all the rights and privileges possessed by their fellow physicians in general practice or other specialties; and, secondly, that no corporation shall practice medicine, this latter rule

† This essay, dictated on the succeeding day, June 30, 1938, was given to his secretary, with the words, "This is my last chapter."